

REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 3-10, 12-28, 30-42, and 44-46 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 10, 19, and 33 are the independent claims.

Claims 2, 11, 29, and 43 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1, 10, 19, 30, 33, and 44 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication in the final Office Action mailed December 7, 2006 that claims 2-9, 11-18, 29, 31, 43, 45 recite patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. By the present Amendment, Applicants have cancelled claims 2, 11, 29, and 33 and have amended independent claims 1, 10, 19, and 33 to respectively recite all of the features of these cancelled claims, there being no intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants submit that all of pending claims 1, 3-10, 12-28, 30-42, and 44-46 are now in allowable form.

Claims 1, 10, 19-28, and 33-42 were rejected 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,262,817 (Sato). Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is traversed by the aforementioned amendments to the independent claims to add subject matter indicated as patentably defining over the citations of record.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.


There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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